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Meeting tonight to reveal plans for sale of Wildwood Girl Scout Center, development of service center in Quincy

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A plan to sell the Wildwood Girl Scout Center in Mount Sterling and the development of a service center in Quincy for the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois will be discussed during a meeting at 5:30 tonight at the Quincy Service Center, 3837 E. Lake Center Drive.

Pam Kovacevich, chief executive officer for the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois, will present a **long-range property plan**.

Wildwood and the Decatur Service Center will be sold by 2012, and the Soldwedel Program Center in Pekin will be sold next year, according to a timeline recently adopted by the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois Board. An asking price for Wildwood has not been determined.

The property plan was determined after a market research firm did a study of all properties, and an 11-person Property Committee was established to evaluate the recommendations of the market research and also conduct a survey of participants and adult leaders.



Kovacevich said the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois has 22,000 members and only 4 percent of that number uses the Wildwood facility.

"When you look at the demographics, it's been difficult to draw the girls from the six to eight counties that surround Wildwood, let alone the 38 counties that we serve," Kovacevich said. "Wildwood is too far out for them to travel comfortably. That's part of the comments that have come from all over."

Nora Baldner of Quincy, chairman of the Property Committee, said the property plan is designed to serve Girl Scouts better.

"The numbers tell the story, and when only 4 percent of your clients go to camp and you're losing money every time you hold a camp ... you have to ask, 'Are we serving our clients?' And the answer is unequivocally no," said Nora Baldner of Quincy, chairman of the Property Committee.

"Appraisals of all the facilities were done, down to the last spoon in the cafeteria, and the girls are telling us: 'We don't like outhouses. We don't like bugs. We don't like camping.' ... You have to vote with your registration, and except for a very small percentage, it wasn't being used."

The horses that are part of an equestrian program at Wildwood will be moved to a similar camp to be established near Metamora.

Girl Scouts officials are beginning a search for property for a service center, preferably on the outskirts of the Quincy area. Kovacevich says she hopes the facility will have 3 to 5 acres to allow for green space.

"What we get will depend on our budget and depends on the location of the property," she said. "There's a possibility that it could include a rock climbing wall, basketball and volleyball courts. ... It won't be just there for troop meetings and crafts, but for programming as well."



Kovacevich said a capital campaign will be developed to raise money, to be combined with the sale of Wildwood, for the new service center.

"You can't take away something without giving this area something," Baldner said. "The service center isn't even formulated yet, and we don't know if it will be a renovation or a new construction. This is all part of a long-range plan that's going to take 10 years to get everything done, and unfortunately, the sale of Wildwood will be part of it."

The lodge at Wildwood was built in 1981, and a shower house was built in 1992. A \$250,000 renovation of Wildwood, which included construction of a zero-depth splash pad, was completed before the June 2005 camping season. The money for those improvements came from the sale of Camp Sacajawea and private donations.

The Girl Scouts have been active in Adams County since 1938.

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ON THE WEB

* To download a PowerPoint presentation of the research and recommendations of the Kaleidoscope Market Research Study, go to www.girlscouts-gsci.org/kaleidoscope-research.

